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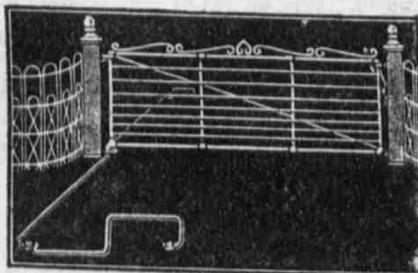
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## Just a Few Rambling Thoughts

A few nights ago the architect of this department went to hear a famous vocal artist whose fame is worldwide. The audience was an enthusiastic and fashionable one, for "society" was out in force, and people who pose as musicians were on hand to add their applause.

Perhaps it was good singing. Undoubtedly it was. The prima donna was a marvelous expert in the handling of a wonderful voice. But somehow or other there seemed to the architect to be something lacking—an indefinable something without which the whole seemed artificial.

While enraptured musicians sat around and gasped, "wonderful," "marvelous," "artistic," and such like words, the architect couldn't work himself up to the enthusiastic point. Now what was it that was lacking? The architect does not know, but to him it seemed to be the "soul quality."

Here is what the architect means: A few weeks ago he stopped on a business corner and listened to the singing of a band of Salvationists. There was a lot of bass drum pounding and tambourine shaking and other accessories used by the Salvation Army, the result being something that was attractive but far from musical. But suddenly a sweet-faced little woman stepped to the front with a guitar, and playing her own accompaniment sang—

"Then I shall meet Him face to face,  
And read the answer, 'Saved by Grace.'"

And what was lacking in the great prima donna's voice was found in the voice of the Salvation Army woman who stood upon the street corner and sang her message of hope and love and cheer into the ears of the casual passersby.

Now, do you understand what the architect is trying to say; what he means when he says there was something lacking in the great artist's singing?

Not long ago the architect went to a big church to hear one of its chief dignitaries preach. The preacher's name is familiar throughout the land. He addressed a congregation that filled the great auditorium to the point of suffocation, but somehow or other that sermon lacked the same thing that the great singer's voice lacked. Scholarly, logical and eloquent, the sermon left one impressed with the mental ability of the man in the pulpit—and that was all.

That same day the architect went to a little mission church in the "poorer quarters" of the city and heard a workingman make a fifteen minutes talk from the pulpit, the regular pastor being absent. The workingman's schooling was practically all acquired in the school of bitter experience. He used the vernacular of his craft, he split his infinitives with reckless abandon, used slang words that would make the scholarly preacher shudder, and his grammar was enough to make the bones of Lindley Murray rattle in their grave. But the one thing lacking in the great church dignitary's scholarly address was found in the simple little talk of this humble workingman. You heard the church dignitary and remembered the man; you heard the workingman and remembered his message of hope and cheer and Christian faith.

It is difficult to explain this sort

of thing, but doubtless you will readily grasp what the architect is trying to explain.

The architect of this department is just old-fashioned enough to be opposed to having a choir stuck away in one corner of the church to do the singing. As a singer he is not a great success, but when he goes to church he wants everybody else to sing so he can burst forth into song without attracting undue attention.

Ever go to church, feeling at peace with all the world and in love with all of nature's works, and then have it all knocked out of you by a salaried quartet standing up all by itself and singing some operatic air whose words you could not understand and whose music lacked all that you had been taught to believe belonged to sacred music? Here is a story that a traveling man told at a Y. M. C. A. meeting in a western city not many months ago:

"I had Christian parents and was raised right. But like many another boy I drifted away from my teaching after I started in life for myself. Through force of habit, however, I usually attended church once a week. This rule I kept up after I went on the road as a salesman. I knew all the time what my duty was, but I kept saying, 'some more convenient day.' I heard the finest church singers in America, and while I appreciated the music it did not touch my soul. One Sunday I missed connections and was forced to spend the day in a little junction town in Nebraska. I went to church in the evening. The congregation was not large, and the minister was not a great pulpit orator. But he had a message and he delivered it. There was no choir, but everybody sang. The sermon moved me deeply, but it was the hymn of invitation that brought me up with a round turn. It was sung by a congregation that was aroused to religious fervor:

"Just as I am without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me;  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O, Lamb of God, I come, I come."

"The moment the song began I was transported back a score of years, and again I was a boy at my mother's knee. That was her favorite song. While the song was being sung I recalled all of her good counsel, all of her sacrifices for her children, all of her simple, trusting faith—and I was overwhelmed with the feeling that for years I had been missing my opportunities and neglecting my duty. That night I went forward, put on the Christian armor, and I am trying the best I know how to live up to the standard set by the Man of Galilee of whom I learned at my mother's knee. And it was that familiar old song, sung by earnest Christian men and women, that awoke me to a sense of my responsibility to myself and to God. Boys, a salaried choir wouldn't have jarred me loose from the old ways in a thousand years."

You simply can not get the music out of a song unless you feel the soul of it, and you can't put soul into anything unless you feel it. And money does not buy that sort of feeling.

In 1898 when the Spanish-American war spirit was at its height, the

Trans-Mississippi exposition was in progress in Omaha. It was "Illinois Day" at the exposition, and Governor Tanner and staff and the high officials of that great state were all there to testify to the grandeur and the glory of Illinois. The Marine Band from Washington, under direction of Mr. Santleman, occupied the great stage in the auditorium. Behind the band sat 500 members of the Chicago Mannechoir. Grouped all about were men in uniform, and the auditorium was a mass of red, white and blue decorations. Governor Tanner had just finished his address and Major Clarkson was about to introduce another speaker, when a telegram was handed to him. It was a bulletin from the front. Major Clarkson glanced at it, stepped forward and raised his hand. Instantly the great audience was hushed, and then he read the bulletin. It announced the landing of the American troops under Shafter on the island of Cuba. Before the audience could start a cheer Director Santleman gave a signal, the splendid band struck up "The Star Spangled Banner," and those 500 trained singers took up the song. Six thousand patriotic Americans joined in, hats and handkerchiefs waving, tears streaming down faces, and flags waving in an excess of fervor. All the gold ever coined in the mints could not have hired singers who could have sung that national anthem as it was sung on that occasion by 6,500 Americans who sang it because they felt it.

At the dedication of the Gettysburg battlefield there were two orators. Every schoolboy and schoolgirl is familiar with the five minutes speech delivered by one of them, for into that little speech was poured the very soul of the speaker. Abraham Lincoln's speech on that occasion will live as long as there are tongues to talk and types to print from. But how many can recall the name of the other orator or quote a sentence from his address? Yet he spent weeks in its preparation and made it the effort of his life.

Just draw this mental picture for yourself: A white-haired old mother sitting alone in the gloom of the evening, her children all gone out into the great busy world, the friends of her childhood either dead or far away, the sun of her life nearly set—just picture this to yourself. Wouldn't you rather hear that Christian old mother singing

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee;  
E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me,"

than to hear any prima donna that ever lived singing a classical composition of one of the "old masters of music?"

Some of these days the architect of this department is going to put into execution a plan he has long had in mind—a plan that is sure to bring him earthly riches. He is going to gather together a band of good singers and take them around over the country giving concerts. Not one of your classic concert devoted to arias and that sort of thing. Not much. He will give a program of the old songs, "Suane River," "Old Folks at Home," "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," "Annie Laurie," "The Sword of Bunker Hill," "Old Kentucky Home," "America," "Star Spangled Banner," "Refuge," "Baxter Street," "Coronation," and songs like these, ending up with the "Doxology."

Honestly, now; wouldn't you rather hear that concert than to listen to some prima donna whose voice has been trained until it works like a piece of machinery?